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TRANSFORMING CHURCHES, TRANSFORMING LIVES
Southeast Conference UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST
SOUTHEAST UCC Conference

January 15, 2017

From the Conference Office

Can We Achieve 100%?

The Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ requests that all churches of the Conference participate in the United Church of Christ's Yearbook Data Entry for 2017. Having accurate information on every church in the Conference is essential to allowing Interim Conference Minister, Marie Bacchiocchi to understand something about the churches in the Conference.

Each church is responsible for inputting their data into the UCC data hub. The window for data entry began on January 3, 2017. A hard copy mailing is being sent to every church. If you require assistance with data entry, please contact Heather Bardole, the SEC Office Administrator, at 404-719-6572. The goal is 100% participation from the churches of the Southeast Conference. Thank you for helping us achieve this goal!

Instructions for using the Data Hub **are on our website**.

Rev. Marie A. Bacchiocchi Announced as Interim Conference Minister

The Southeast Conference Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Rev. Marie A. Bacchiocchi has accepted the call to serve as Interim Conference Minister. She is currently serving as an Associate Conference Minister in Central Atlantic Conference. She will begin her ministry in Southeast Conference on March 6 by attending the Council of Conference Ministers meeting in Cleveland. Her first full day in the Conference will be March 13. **Learn more about Marie on our website**.

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Coming Events

Conference Moves to a Virtual Office
January 1, 2017

Capital Campaign Grant Application Open
Mon, Jan 16, 2017

Board of Directors Meeting
Tue, Jan 17, 2017
Online Web Meeting

Moderator's Message

by JR FInney, Conference Moderator

This New Year of 2017 begins a new era for the Southeast Conference as we enter our 51st year. We have not closed our conference office but we have moved to a virtual office. A couple of weeks ago, June and I sent out a letter to all the churches with pertinent information you need to know concerning the move to a virtual office.

The work of the Conference and the conference minister continues. But we are learning to do things differently to address the changing circumstances in which we find ourselves. I have always been fond of the passage of scripture in Esther 4:14, where Mordecai, knowing his people were being threatened, went to Queen Esther and said to her, "Who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this." Having become the Conference Moderator and Board Chair at the 2016 Annual Meeting, I have come to appreciate the sentiment of those words even more.

Having had the opportunity to look behind the scenes, aided by a great staff, attorney and CPA, the Southeast Conference, with Rev. June Boutwell as our Designated Conference Minister, has made great strides. Her leadership and guidance coupled with her financial, administrative, and UCC experience made her just the right person "for such a time as this." This is evidenced by this being the theme for the 2014 Conference Annual Meeting, where she was installed, and these past three years.

The work of the incoming Interim Conference Minister, Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi, will be to build upon the great work of Rev. June, and then shepherding the conference to a vision of ministry to meet our changing circumstances. I commend the work of the Interim Search Committee and the Board for I too believe Rev. Marie is the right person to do the work "for such a time as this."

Today, the conference faces 2017 in a sound and sustainable financial and administrative position. But this is a beginning--we have not arrived! The work of the Conference is an ongoing journey. To ensure our abilities to continue to be effective in missions and ministry requires the ongoing commitment and support of local UCC congregations through Our Church's Wider Mission (OWCM) basic financial support and by those who serve the conference on Boards and Committees and other ministries. The future holds much that is needed to meet the continually changing challenges we will face and ministry opportunities with which we will be presented.

To paraphrase what Mordecai said to Esther, "Who knows, maybe you have come to a royal position as a member of that part of the Body of Christ we know as the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ for such a time as this!"

God is still speaking! But we need your help to ensure that the voice of God is heard in our local churches, communities, Conference, and the United Church of Christ.

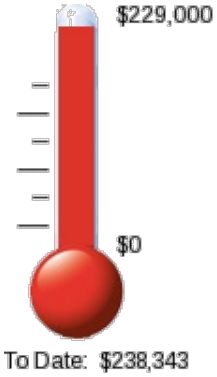
Celebrating a Successful Grant Project:

Commission on Ministry Meeting
Sat, Jan 21, 2017
Online Web Meeting

SEC Staff Meeting
Thu, Feb 2, 2017
Atlanta, Georgia

East AL/West GA Association Meeting
Sat, Feb 11, 2017
Pine Mountain, Georgia

OCWM Giving



Our Church's Wider Mission provides for programs, resources, and tools to keep our churches strong, effective, and growing. Thanks to you, we met our 2016 goal, but you can still give.
Donate Online Today

Conference Staff

June Boutwell
Designated Conference Minister
jboutwell@secucc.org
404-615-2492

Heather Bardole
Conference Registrar / Administrator
registrar@secucc.org
404-719-6572

Sarah Kim
Executive Director of Theological Education and Dean of PATHWAYS
skim@secucc.org

Debbie Spearman
Generosity Coordinator
dspearman@secucc.org

Don Harris
Director of Communications
communicationsdirector@

Emmanuel UCC

One of our newer churches in Greenville, South Carolina, Emmanuel UCC, applied and were awarded a $5,000 grant. Their project objective was to expand awareness of their new church and it's Mission in upstate South Carolina. **Read all about their project on our website**.

Prayer List

We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2017. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers. Click here to download the entire 2017 prayer list.

Week of February 5

- Safe Harbor Family Church UCC; Flowood, Mississippi
- Dwight Andrews
- Robin Lee Fitch
- Amber Kirkendoll
- Gail McGill
- Jodi Yarini

Week of February 12

- Garden of Grace UCC; Columbia, South Carolina
- Thomas Eckert
- Leah Lyman Waldron
- Susan Mitchell
- Helen Smith

Prayer Requests

- Prayers for **Whitney Walton** and her family as they mourn the death of her father, Tim Walton, this week in Arkansas. She asked for prayers for her mother, Carla Walton, who has been his round-the-clock caregiver, and her sister, for strength and peace in the family. Whitney is with her family at this time. She was scheduled to be at the Member in Discernment Retreat. She serves on the Support and Nurture Ministry Team of the Commission on Ministry.
- Prayers for **United Church of Huntsville** and **Rev. Sam Greening** as they begin their interim ministry together.
- Prayers for those who gathered for the **Member in Discernment/Persons in Exploration Retreat** on January 13-14 at Pleasant Hill, Tennessee. And gratitude for the leadership and hospitality of the **Pleasant Hill Community Church** in hosting this gathering.
- Prayers for traveling mercies and a safe event as the Winter Youth Retreat gathers at Blowing Rock Conference Center in North Carolina over Martin Luther King Weekend, January 13-16, 2017.

secucc.org

Chris Lyman Waldron
IT Specialist
clwaldron@secucc.org

Mailing Address:
Post Office Box 1950
Decatur, GA 30031-1950
Phone: 404-719-6572
www.secucc.org

Connect with Us!

Conference Transitions

- **Jodi Yarini** was ordained on January 15, 2017 at Virginia Highland Church. Prayers for Decatur UCC and their leadership as they confirm this relationship.
- **Joshua Kuipers** was ordained on January 15, 2017 at Kirkwood UCC during their regular worship service.
- **Sam Greening** has been called to serve as interim at United Church of Huntsville. He will begin his ministry on February 1, 2017. He comes to Huntsville from La Jolla UCC in La Jolla, California.
- Welcome to **Marie Bacchiocchi** as she finishes her ministry in Central Atlantic Conference and prepares to move to Southeast conference to begin her position on March 6, 2017.

Churches in Transition

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; United Church, Huntsville, Tennessee.

News from Around the Conference

Bob Hurst Retires from United Church of Huntsville

The United Church of Huntsville said farewell to Rev. Bob Hurst on January 1, 2017. June Boutwell represented the Southeast Conference in witnessing the Liturgy of Farewell. A great blessing of the day was that the entire family was able to gather for this time of farewell. A potluck luncheon followed the worship service.

Honduras Global Ministries Speakers Available to Local Churches

Don and Maryjane Westra, finishing a four year appointment in Honduras for Common Global Ministries, are available to speak in the Southeast Conference and Tennessee Region Disciples of Christ. The dates they are available are March 25 - April 9, 2017. **Learn more on our website**.

Interested in a Possible New Church Plant in Myrtle Beach?

The Southeast Conference is exploring the possibility of a UCC church plant in Myrtle Beach, SC. If you live in the area and are interested in joining the team, they are having a meeting on

Friday, February 10 at 1:15 p.m. (location TBD). All are welcome and you should not feel reluctant, anticipating that you might be making a commitment. The team is in the exploration phase only, but we hope you can join us! For more details, contact Linda Tomsen at **ltomsen11@yahoo.com**.

News from the United Church of Christ

General Synod 2017: June 30-July 4 in Baltimore, Maryland

Every two years, General Synod brings together thousands of faithful members of the United Church of Christ for formal church witness, inspirational worship, and fellowship with friends (new and old). In June 2017, thousands from across the country (and abroad) will gather for General Synod 2017 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Together, we will discern resolutions of witness, church structure, and function. We will stand up for issues that demand a faithful witness. And we will join together in worship each day to lift up the Stillspeaking God. At General Synod 2017, we will "Make Glad!" as we celebrate, debate, worship and witness. Join us. Learn more on the Synod website: **synod.uccpages.org**.

Antoinette Brown Award Nominations Open

In 1975, the United Church of Christ honored two clergywomen with the first Antoinette Brown Award, celebrating the life and ministry of the first woman ordained into Christian ministry since biblical times as well as the lives and ministries of UCC clergywomen who exemplify Brown's spirit of trailblazing leadership in church and society.

Over forty years later, the pathways are considerably widened for women in ministry in the UCC, but there are still necessarily pioneers and innovators in our midst, women who lead in extraordinary ways and who make possible other women's ministries. From March 1 - April 15, 2017, **we invite your nominations of trailblazers** (UCC clergywomen who honor Antoinette Brown's vision of women in leadership in church and society) as well as catalysts (collectives, projects, congregations, or organizations that serve as provocative spaces that advance women in ministry). Honorees will be celebrated at General Synod in Baltimore this summer.

Training, Learning and Retreat Opportunities

Live & Learn @ TACC

TACC is offering wonderful opportunities in February for anybody who struggles with stress or with chronic pain. They include gentle body movement to increase the participants' awareness of their bodies, where they hold the stress or pain in their body physically, and how to work with one's emotions and stressors to release some of the tension and learn how to self-care while coping with chronic conditions. TACC life coach Barbara Kemper facilitates these two groups. She is of German origin and speaks

English and Portuguese.

Please join Counseling @ TACC and community experts for lunch, and to learn more about how to explore life's difficult conversations and challenging situations. All are welcome! Suggested Donation: $5 for attendance, $15 for attendance and lunch. For more information about Live & Learn @ TACC, please visit their website.

UCC Study on Clergy Well-Being

All UCC clergy and Members in Discernment are being invited to participate in the Flourishing in Ministry project, a national study on clergy well-being. This research is being done in partnership with the UCC national setting and all Conferences. Ministers and MIDs will be receiving an email on February 7, 2017 that will invite you to participate in this study, though you are not required to do so. Details can be found here: **http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/ucc_clergy_wellbeing.pdf**

Back Bay Mission Accepting Scholarship Apps

Back Bay Mission is now accepting applications for the 2017 Shari Prestemon Social Justice Internship. This internship provides people between the ages of 19 and 35 with a unique opportunity to participate in a 10-week summer program tailored to their interests.

Drawing on the Mission's long experience in community engagement and advocacy for justice, the internship will nurture participants' passion for social justice and develop their appreciation for the church's role in seeking social justice.

Applications must be submitted by March 1. Notifications will be made by March 31. **Learn more about the internship and download an application**.

Diving Lessons / 2017 Lent Devotional by the Stillspeaking Writers' Group

Diving Lessons is a fresh collection of unique Lenten devotions that includes an insightful scripture verse and prayer for each day of Lent. Begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1, and continues through Easter Sunday, April 16. Can be used in individual or group settings.

Devotional titles include:

- Jesus is Coming, Look Busy!
- Do Non-organic Parents Not Love Their Children?
- A Tale of Two Jesuses
- Christian Privilege
- Take a Dip

5-pack - $16.50 (plus shipping); Single copy - $6.50 (with FREE shipping in USA only). **Order from UCC Resources**

Summer Institute on Theology and Disability

Interested in the intersections of theology, faith, and disability? The 2017 Summer Institute on Theology and Disability will be held at Azusa Pacific University, June 5-8, and hosted by Azusa Pacific University in partnership with Fuller Theological Seminary. **Learn more on their website**.

Justice Opportunities in Atlanta

The **Georgia Justice Project** and eleven other organizations join directly impacted people and concerned citizens to promote criminal justice reform in Georgia on February 2. Justice Day attendees will learn about current reform efforts, have the opportunity to speak to their legislators about these critical issues, and will hear from leaders in the reform movement. **Learn more and register here**.

The **Georgia Volunteer Health Care Program**, launched in 2006, was designed to increase and promote access to free quality health care for the uninsured and underinsured by promoting volunteerism of licensed health care professionals who donate health care to eligible patients. To protect the volunteer, the State of Georgia becomes solely liable for any injury or damages suffered by a patient receiving the donated health care, as long as the provider works within the scope of their professional license. Learn more about volunteer programs and to register to help at **georgiaresponds.org**.

Save the Date: Conferences in 2017

UCC Musicians Conference
Their National Biennial Conference will be held July 9-12, 2017 in Boston, Massachusetts. The theme is Empowering Musicians, Transforming Communities. Learn more.

Retired Servants' Retreat
Held at the beautiful Blowing Rock Conference Center, this retreat is for Southern and Southeast Conferences combined. It will be held Oct 2-4, 2017. Planning Leader for the 2017 event is George Bennett from Southeast Conference. His email is lajoyaredpoint@gmail.com.

Southern Region Women's Conference
Make plans now to join others from around our region at Mo Ranch in Hunt, Texas from October 20-22, 2017. We will be hosted by the women of the South Central Conference.